

Are Honor Killings Unique? A Comparison of Honor Killings, Domestic Violence Homicides, and Hate Homicides by Far-Right Extremists

Homicide Studies

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Abstract

This study compared honor killings, domestic violence homicides, and hate homicides committed by far-right extremists. Prior research has suggested that terrorists may differ from “regular” offenders whereas others suggest similarities. Data from the Extremist Crime Database were used to compare honor killings committed in the United States since 1990 to domestic violence and hate homicides ($N = 48$). Open-source documents were closed coded for criminal justice involvement, domestic violence history, motivation, and offenders’ mental illness. Honor killings were more likely to have a history of domestic violence in open sources than hate homicides, suggesting these three homicides may be more similar than different.

Keywords

femicide, gender, intimate partner, victim–offender relationship, honor killing, extremism, hate homicide

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This study examines the characteristics of honor killings, domestic violence homicides, and hate homicides committed by far-right extremists to identify commonalities and differences across these three seemingly distinct types of homicides based on ideas of Perry (2001) and Hirschi and Gottfredson (2001). We examine prior involvement with the criminal justice system generally, history of domestic violence, the motivation for the incident, and offenders' claims of mental illness for each of the three homicide types. Little is known about if, and how honor killings are distinct from domestic violence homicides and hate homicides. Prior research, in fact, has stated that the definition of an honor killing is contextual and often unclear (Shier & Shor, 2016). Our goal in identifying the similarities and differences across these homicide types is to extend and refine theorizing on these topics. Below, we conceptualize honor killings, domestic violence homicides, and hate homicides, and discuss each crime's characteristics, including the typical victim–offender relationship and potential motivations.

Honor Killings

Honor killings are conceptualized as violent acts committed by one or more perpetrators, generally a male, to restore honor to their family in response to the victim's perceived violation of familial honor codes or misbehaviors that are believed to shame the family (Kulwicki, 2002). This definition consists of several components. First, a violent act, which can be fatal or nonfatal, must be committed (Cooney, 2014). It is estimated that 5,000 women and children are killed annually in honor killings (United Nations Population Fund, 2000), though this estimate likely underreports the true numbers (Wikan, 2008). The second component holds that the victim is targeted because the perpetrator(s) believed the victim's actual or alleged behavior violated an honor code. The victim's real or perceived behaviors are believed by the perpetrator(s) to cause shame to the family. Studies find that females may "dishonor" their family by violating or being *perceived* to violate female chastity norms, including loss of virginity before marriage, infidelity (Baker, Gregware, & Cassidy, 1999; Cooney, 2014; Kulwicki, 2002), interacting socially with nonfamily males (Akpınar, 2003), or acting autonomously by, for example, gaining an education, leaving an abusive husband, or dressing how she wants (Hayes, Freilich, & Chermak, 2016; Hasan, 2002; İnce, Yaralı, & Özsel, 2009; Pope, 2012). Finally, the offender(s) believes the violent act will restore their family's honor. Overall, what is important is that the concept of honor serves as a mechanism to reinforce and legitimate patriarchy within particular cultures (Baker et al., 1999).

Prior research finds the victim–offender relationship differs depending upon the country in which the honor killing is committed and that one or more offenders can commit the act. Kulwicki (2002) concludes brothers and extended kin are more likely to commit honor killings outside the United States. In comparison, Hayes and colleagues (2016) report the most frequent perpetrator of an American honor killing is the victim's father followed by the victim's current or estranged spouse.

Honor killings committed in the Western world, and specifically the United States, may differ in terms of motivation and justifications because of variations in the interpretation of honor. Honor in the United States, and in Western norms, is considered an individual attribute, whereas honor rests on the family unit in traditional cultures. A male's honor is dependent not only on his behavior but also on his female relatives' behaviors (Baker et al., 1999; Doğan, 2011; Uskel, Cross, Sunbay, Gercek-Swing, & Ataca, 2012). Research on Jordanian honor killings finds that the motivation for these crimes invariably rested on the female victim's alleged sexual misconduct (Kulwicki, 2002). Conversely, Hayes et al. (2016) report the process of separation and the westernized behavior of the victim—or alleged behavior—were the primary motivations for the 16 U.S. honor killings. Prior research has suggested that perpetrators of honor killings may “believe that he has done what was expected, or what he was supposed to do” (Doğan, 2014, p. 369), which would limit offender's potential claims of mental illness. In fact, offenders may use techniques of neutralization to justify their behavior (van Baak, Hayes, Freilich, & Chermak, 2017; Doğan, 2014).

Importantly, all 16 of the U.S. honor killings included at least one technique of neutralization. Eleven of the 16 U.S. honor killings include an appeal to higher loyalties to justify and/or neutralize the crime (van Baak et al., 2017). Only seven of these 11 cases embraced a specific appeal to religion, suggesting there are various ways to justify the incident and that honor killings are a multidimensional phenomenon. It is possible that an offender's motivation and/or justification for an honor killing may resemble justifications for other types of homicide. Honor killings may be a subset of domestic violence homicides and may be labeled as honor killings because of the victim and offender's identity (Baker et al., 1999; Shier & Shor, 2016). Honor killings, however, may also resemble hate homicides committed by extremists if the offenders are partially motivated by furthering political or cultural belief systems, as opposed to only being motivated by personal considerations.

Domestic Violence Homicides

Within the United States, family homicides constitute more than a fifth (22%) of all homicides, with the most common victim–offender relationship being current or former intimate partners followed by parent–child (Cooper & Smith, 2011; Durose et al., 2005). Women account for more than half (58%) of family murder victims and men are more likely to be perpetrators in fatal family violence cases (Durose et al., 2005). Thus, the purview of domestic violence cases is broader than honor killings as they do not require specific criteria regarding motivation. Honor killings, by definition, are “interfamilial murder or attempted murder of a female by a male relative” (Kulczycki & Windle, 2011, p. 1447) and may be subsumed under domestic violence to limit singling out a particular group (Siddiqui, 2005; Terman, 2010).

Baker et al. (1999) argue that honor is an integral piece of patriarchy as it relates to violence against women. They suggest that abusive men's feelings of shame are tied to the loss of control over women's behavior. What differentiates Western nations from Middle and Far-Eastern nations is that the locus of control shifts from kin to an

individual partner. This change in the locus of control limits the level of community engagement in restraining the shame abusive men feel when control is lost. The focus on honor killings in the media, it is argued, may draw attention away from the broader social issue of patriarchy and frame the issue within the victim and offender's immigrant or religious backgrounds (Shier & Shor, 2016).

Abusive men use violence against female victims to maintain power and control (Wilson & Daly, 1998) through an ongoing process of entrapment (Stark, 2007). Prior research on media coverage of domestic violence homicides suggests an episodic focus, rather than highlighting the continuous nature of domestic violence. In this coverage, the homicide is an isolated event involving people different from us (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; C. A. Taylor & Sorenson, 2002; Wozniak & McCloskey, 2010). This becomes problematic as it negates the well-documented finding that domestic violence includes repeat victimization (Farrell & Buckley, 1999), and a woman whose intimate partner has a criminal history is more likely to be victimized (Carbone-Lopez & Kruttschnitt, 2010). Honor killings may fall within a discourse that makes "bright boundaries" between insiders and outsiders or immigrants and the majority (Shier & Shor, 2016, p. 1180).

The media portrayal of domestic violence homicide can both directly and indirectly highlight the victim's culpability. Focusing on a domestic violence homicide perpetrator's mental illness may shift the blame to the victim (R. Taylor, 2009). When the media concentrates on the recent moral or social breakdown in the offender's life, the homicide is attributed to the offender's experiences and keeps the focus away from broader social forces (Gillespie, Richards, Givens, & Smith, 2013), like patriarchy. Although prior research shows honor killers deny responsibility because of delusions/trauma and/or immediate dissociation (van Baak et al., 2017), little is known about how claims of mental illness and media portrayal differ across domestic violence homicides and honor killings.

Hate Homicides Committed by Far-Right Extremists

Hate crimes are committed wholly or in part by the offender's bias against the victim's *actual or perceived* race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.), political affiliation, age (Anti-Defamation League, 2016), or homelessness (Goldberg, 2014). According to Uniform Crime Report (UCR) statistics, bias-motivated homicides only make up 0.1% of all hate crimes with an average of six homicides a year from 2003 to 2011 (Sandholtz, Langton, & Planty, 2013). There are a number of weaknesses though with police data on hate crime. In addition to underreporting by victims, hate crime is underidentified by victims and the police, underinvestigated and underrecorded by the police due to variation in resources, specialized training, and differential compliance in hate crime reporting across police departments, cities, and states (Freilich & Chermak, 2013; King, 2007; King, Messner, & Baller, 2009). For example, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs identifies between 18 and 30 bias-motivated homicides of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) and HIV-affected persons

each year (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014, 2015, 2016), a much higher number than those recorded in the UCR (Freilich & Chermak, 2013).

Although there is no consensus on the profile of the typical hate crime offender (Craig, 2002), several studies illustrate the profile of violent and extremist hate crime perpetrators. In a study of convicted violent hate crime perpetrators, Dunbar, Quinones, and Crevecoeur (2005) find that most had a criminal history, and that hate group-affiliated offenders had the most violent and extensive criminal histories. J. Levin and McDevitt (2002) conclude that hate crime offenders who belonged to hate groups were more likely to have experienced mental illness. Dunbar (2002) finds that a majority of convicted perpetrators have substance abuse issues and more than a fifth have a history of psychiatric treatment. Examining far-right perpetrators of ideologically motivated homicides (of which the majority were bias motivated), Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich (2013) similarly observe that most have prior arrests and approximately a third abuse drugs or alcohol. They reveal that 41.0% of loners and 19.2% of lone wolves experience mental illness; however, they find low levels of reported mental illness for perpetrators acting in groups, known as wolf packs.

Although extremists are not responsible for the majority of hate crimes (McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002), B. Levin (2012) finds that extremists possessing hate-based ideologies commit a large fraction of such homicides. Mills, Freilich, and Chermak (2015) explain that hate crime offending is often linked to broader social, political, and/or religious beliefs and that the offenders act on quasi-political beliefs, attacking perceived "others" based on their own biases as an expression of their social norms (Mills et al., 2015, p. 6). Thus, hate homicides are similar to honor killings, in that both stem from an offender's belief system. Whereas honor killings involve a familial victim-offender relationship, hate crime offenders commonly target strangers (Langton & Planty, 2011; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia, Gu, & 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Although honor killings, domestic violence homicides, and hate homicides may differ, they all fall under the umbrella of Perry's (2001) theory of violence as "doing difference." Perry explains how "notions of difference . . . have been used to justify and construct intersecting hierarchies along lines of sexuality, race, gender, and class" (p. 46). Perry describes how this process facilitates the stability of the hierarchies in social structures based on difference and the subsequent inequality as powerful groups maintain dominance over designated "others." Calling violence against woman a type of hate crime, she emphasizes that both violence against women and bias-motivated violence succeed in exercising control to maintain dominance as well as create identity. She further asserts that targets of both types of violence "are victimized because of their identity, often for very illusory violations" citing Brownmiller's (1975) list of such violations, including

being uppity, for getting out of line, for failing to recognize "one's place," for assuming sexual freedoms, or for behaving no more provocative than walking down the wrong road

at night in the wrong part of town and presenting a convenient isolated target for group hatred and rage. (p. 281 as cited in Perry, 2001, p. 83)

Both honor killings and domestic violence sustain male dominance and punish women for behaviors that are seen to shame men. Similarly, bias-motivated violence may maintain identity and punishment of “Others” as “the perpetrator can reassert his/her hegemonic identity and, at the same time, punish the victim(s) for their individual or collective performance of identity” (Perry, 2001, p. 55). Such identity-based violence succeeds in the enforcement of existing hierarchies.

Perry’s arguments suggest similarities across all three of these homicide types and that significant differences should not emerge across these three categories. However, Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) have limited the applicability of their long-standing low self-control general theory of crime to political offenders. Hirschi and Gottfredson (2001) argue that unlike regular criminals who commit crime because they are unsocialized, political offenders committed to their cause have higher levels of self-control and engage in some planning before committing their attacks. Under this reasoning, extremists who commit hate crimes fall into Hirschi and Gottfredson’s terrorism category (political offenders), whereas domestic violence killers are more akin to their regular offenders. Based on this framework, we expect to find differences between hate homicide offenders and domestic violence homicide perpetrators, especially in terms of prior criminal justice system involvement. That is, we expect hate homicide offenders to be more specialized in their offending histories. It is a bit more uncertain regarding honor killers because our discussion above highlighted their linkages to both hate homicide and domestic violence killings. Here, we hope to empirically shed light on this issue.

Aims of the Current Study

We focus on exploring demographic, mental illness, and criminal justice system involvement across the three groups. In addition, we unpack motivation for these groups. Based on the literature review, we propose that hate homicides will differ from domestic violence homicide and honor killings in terms of prior criminal justice system involvement (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2001). We examined the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): Offenders of hate homicides are more likely to have criminal justice system involvement unrelated to domestic violence than offenders of domestic violence homicides.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): Offenders of hate homicides are more likely to have criminal justice system involvement unrelated to domestic violence than offenders of honor killings.

Based on extant research about coverage of domestic violence homicide offenders (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; C. A. Taylor & Sorenson, 2002; Wozniak & McCloskey, 2010), we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): Offenders of honor killings are more likely to have criminal justice system involvement related to domestic violence than offenders of hate homicides.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Offenders of domestic violence homicide are more likely to have criminal justice system involvement related to domestic violence than offenders of hate homicides.

Hypothesis 3a (H3a): Offenders of honor killings are more likely to have prior domestic violence noted in open sources than offenders of domestic violence homicides.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b): Offenders of honor killings are more likely to have prior domestic violence noted in open sources than offenders of hate homicides.

Finally, based on the claims put forth by van Baak et al. (2017) and Doğan (2014), we expect that honor killers will neutralize or justify their crimes rather than claim a mental illness defense. In comparison, offenders of hate homicides will be more likely to put forth claims of mental illness (Dunbar, 2002; Gruenewald et al., 2013; J. Levin & McDevitt, 2002). The following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4a (H4a): Offenders of hate homicides are more likely to claim mental illness than offenders of honor killings.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b): Offenders of hate homicides are more likely to claim mental illness than offenders of domestic violence homicides.

Data and Method

This study uses data from the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), which collects open-source materials to identify violent and financial crimes committed by political extremists in the United States. Relying on the ECDB coding and identification process, we identified *all* publicly known honor killings committed in the United States since 1990,¹ and *all* publicly known hate homicides committed by far-right extremists to further their ideology (emphasis added; Freilich, Chermak, Belli, Gruenewald, & Parkin, 2014; Hayes et al., 2016). In sum, the ECDB contains the “universe (or close to it)” of all known honor killings and hate homicides committed in the United States since 1990.

As we elaborate below, we also relied upon the ECDB’s open-source search protocol to identify a comparison group of domestic violence homicides. The ECDB is a relational database that contains variables at different levels of analysis, including incident, offender, victim, and organizational levels. The ECDB has been used for a variety of studies that focus on extremist violence (Freilich et al., 2014; Freilich, Adamczyk, Chermak, Boyd, & Parkin, 2015; Mills et al., 2015; Suttmoeller, Chermak, & Freilich, 2016). The coding of incidents is a multistage process (Freilich et al., 2014).² First, open sources, including official sources, watch groups, and scholarly accounts, were consulted to identify cases that fit the inclusion criteria. Once incidents

were identified, more than 30 web engines and databases were searched to collect all publicly available information on the event.³

Honor Killing Population

Through a similar process used to identify all homicides committed by extremists in the United States (Freilich et al., 2014; Hayes et al., 2016), the ECDB identified all known honor killings (i.e., the universe) committed within the United States ($n = 16$). For an honor killing to be included in the ECDB, and thus in the current study, several criteria had to be met. First, a homicide must have been committed. Second, the incident must have occurred between January 1, 1990, and December 31, 2016. Third, the offender(s) targeted the victim because of the victim's actual or perceived misbehaviors the offender(s) believed could bring shame to the family. Fourth, the honor killing was committed by the perpetrator(s) with the motive of protecting or regaining the perceived honor of the perpetrator(s), family, and/or community. Fifth, the perpetrator(s) believed the death of the victim would accomplish a social goal, for example, revenge or a warning. Again, in total, 16 incidents satisfied the honor killing inclusion criteria and were coded in the ECDB and, therefore, are a U.S.-based population.

Hate Homicide Committed by Far-Right Extremists Sample

The ECDB has also identified all known hate homicides (i.e., the universe) in the United States. We used the ECDB's universe of extremist hate homicides to randomly select a hate homicide that occurred within a similar time frame as each of the honor killings. The justification for this was twofold. Limiting the time frame to a 1-month period reduced the threat of internal validity by accounting for external events that may occur close in time (Maxfield & Babbie, 2015). Second, because the ECDB includes the population of hate homicides and honor killings, random selection works to ensure the groups are as equal as possible when every element of the population is known (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). Therefore, random selection allows us to generalize from the sample to the broader population. Finally, when limiting the hate homicide sample to a 1-month time frame, many cases did not occur within the same geographical region as the honor killing and/or were not reported in the same news sources.

For each honor killing, we searched the ECDB for a hate homicide that occurred within the same month.⁴ ECDB hate crimes are homicides where a far-right extremist committed the act due to ideological reasons and purposefully targeted the victim due to their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or homelessness status. Hate homicides comprise the ECDB's largest category (close to 50%) and are followed by antigovernment and society at large attacks and other categories (such as antiabortion, etc.). For cases where more than one hate homicide was identified, we randomly selected one case.

Domestic Violence Homicide Sample

For this category, we supplemented ECDB data with additional open-source data. For each honor killing, we did a targeted search in Google and LexisNexis of “domestic violence homicides” that occurred within the same month of the honor killing. Again, doing so allowed us to reduce the threat of internal validity and was as similar as possible to the process used to select the hate homicide sample. Similar to the issues raised with the hate homicide sample, many domestic violence homicides were not committed in the same geographical region as the honor killing. Of the potential homicides identified for each of the honor killing cases, we randomly selected one domestic violence homicide, resulting in a sample of 16 domestic violence homicides.

Analysis

Data from all 48 cases (i.e., 16 honor killings, 16 domestic violence homicides, and 16 hate homicides) were systematically coded using a closed coding scheme based on the ECDB coding process. More specifically, we coded each case’s open-source documents for (a) total number of perpetrators and victims, (b) the victim–offender relationship, (c) perpetrators’ prior involvement with the criminal justice system unrelated to domestic violence and related to domestic violence, (d) history of domestic violence that did not result in criminal justice system involvement, (e) the motivation for the incident, and (f) if the offender had a history of mental illness. First, demographic characteristics including the total number of perpetrators and victims as well as the victim–offender relationship are reviewed for each type of homicide. Following this, we conducted *t* tests for each hypothesis in which two proportions were compared.

Results

Total Number of Perpetrators

Table 1 presents our findings. Honor killings were committed by a total of 19 perpetrators, with one case having three perpetrators, one case having two, and the remaining 14 cases involving one perpetrator. In the honor killing that involved three perpetrators, the offender, with two friends acting as accomplices, killed his former girlfriend’s father and sister by burning down their house because they disapproved of the relationship. The honor killing with two offenders involved two cousins who murdered their cousin. Domestic violence homicides included in the sample had a similar number of perpetrators ($n = 18$). These 18 perpetrators included two cases with two offenders, whereas the remaining 14 cases had only one offender. Interestingly, our hate homicides sample involved more offenders than the other two categories and were committed by 25 perpetrators. One case had four perpetrators, one case had three, four cases had two, and the remaining 10 cases had only one perpetrator. Thus, the vast majority of homicides across cases ($n = 38$, 79.17% of cases) involved only one offender.

Table 1. Total Number of Victims, Total Number of Perpetrators, Victim–Offender Relationship, and History of Mental Illness Across Honor Killings, Domestic Violence Homicides, and Hate Homicides by Far-Right Extremists.

	Honor killings	Domestic violence homicides	Hate homicides by far-right extremists
Total number of victims	40	20	21
Total number of perpetrators	19	18	25
Most common victim–offender relationship	Father–child (daughter)	Current or former girlfriend	Strangers
Perpetrator had history of mental illness	3	0	3

Total Number of Victims and Victim–Offender Relationship

The honor killings had a total of 40 victims, indicating that many incidents included multiple victims. Overall, half of the honor killings ($n = 8$) involved one fatality. Two fatalities were the second most common ($n = 3$), followed by four fatalities ($n = 2$). The remaining honor killings each had five, six, and seven fatalities. The most common victim–offender relationship was father–daughter.

There were 20 victims for the domestic violence homicides included in the sample. The vast majority of domestic violence homicides involved only one fatality ($n = 13$). The remaining incidents included two fatalities ($n = 3$) and three fatalities ($n = 1$). The most common victim–offender relationship was the perpetrator’s current ($n = 3$) or former girlfriend ($n = 4$). Perpetrators of domestic violence homicides appeared less likely to murder extended family members ($n = 4$ victims or 20% of domestic violence homicide victims) compared with perpetrators of honor killings ($n = 15$ victims or 37.5% of honor killing victims). However, this difference was not statistically significant ($z = -1.37, p \geq .05$).

Hate homicides resulted in 21 fatalities, with the majority of incidents involving one fatality ($n = 12$). The remaining incidents resulted in two fatalities ($n = 3$) and three fatalities ($n = 1$). The most common victim–offender relationship for the hate homicides was strangers ($n = 12$), suggesting the majority of victims and offenders did not have a prior relationship. In the remaining hate homicides, the victim was a former classmate of the perpetrator, the perpetrator’s cellmate, an acquaintance, and the son of the perpetrator’s girlfriend.

Prior Criminal Justice System Involvement

In total, three of the 19 honor killing perpetrators (15.79%) had involvement with the criminal justice system that was not explicitly related to domestic violence. One offender was arrested for burglarizing a school, another pled guilty to misdemeanor grand theft, and the last offender served time for a felony cocaine possession. One perpetrator of an honor killing who committed a murder-suicide had “history with

Table 2. Offender's Prior Criminal Justice Involvement and History of Domestic Violence Across Honor Killings, Domestic Violence Homicides, and Hate Homicides by Far-Right Extremists.

	Honor killings		Domestic violence homicides		Hate homicides by far-right extremists	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Prior criminal justice involvement	3	15.79	4	22.22	10	40.00
Prior criminal justice involvement for domestic violence	5	26.32	5	27.78	5	20.00
Prior domestic violence in open sources	11	57.89	7	38.89	5	20.00
Total perpetrators (<i>N</i>)	19		18		25	

police” but further detail was not provided and was, therefore, not included in the total. Similarly, four of the 18 domestic violence perpetrators (22.22%) had involvement with the criminal justice system. The difference in proportions between these two groups was not statistically significant ($z = -0.50, p \geq .05$). One offender had served time on a statutory rape conviction⁵ and two offenders had histories of criminal arrests. In another case, police responded to 13 calls for service at the perpetrator's residence.

In total, 10 of the 25 hate homicide perpetrators (40.00%) had prior involvement with the criminal justice system that was not explicitly related to domestic violence. Many of the open sources described the perpetrator as a felon or that the perpetrator had prior felonies. Other open sources highlighted that the perpetrator had been in a correctional institution. However, the proportion of hate homicide offenders with prior criminal justice system involvement was not significantly different from offenders of honor killings ($z = -1.74, p \geq .05$) or domestic violence homicides ($z = -1.23, p \geq .05$), indicating H1a and H1b were not supported. Findings regarding prior criminal justice system involvement and history of domestic violence can be found in Table 2.

Prior Criminal Justice System Involvement for Domestic Violence and History of Domestic Violence via Open Sources

Overall, 11 of the 19 honor killing perpetrators (57.89%) had a documented history of domestic violence or threats in the open sources compared with five honor killing perpetrators (26.32%) who had a documented history of criminal justice system involvement related to domestic violence. In comparison, less than half of the domestic violence perpetrators ($n = 7$ out of 18 or 38.89%) had a documented history of domestic violence in the open sources. The open sources alluded to criminal justice system involvement that was related to domestic violence for five of the domestic violence homicide perpetrators (27.78%). Interestingly, five of the hate homicide

perpetrators (20.00%) had a documented history of domestic violence in the open sources, while it was implied five of the hate homicide perpetrators had prior involvement with the criminal justice system because of domestic violence. Overall, the only significant difference that emerged between offenders of honor killings and offenders of hate homicide is in terms of domestic violence mentioned in the open sources ($z = 2.59, p \leq .01$). This finding supports H3b, which proposed offenders of honor killings would be more likely to have prior domestic violence noted in open sources than offenders of hate homicides. H2a, H2b, and H3a were not supported.

For example, a perpetrator of an honor killing had threatened to kill one of his daughters via text message due to her dating. This perpetrator had also gone into his daughters' room with a gun while threatening her ("“Honor” killing comes to the US,” 2008; McCain, 2008). In another honor killing, family members said the offender made threats against his daughter because she was not living according to traditional Iraqi values (Man Ran Down “Too Westernized” Daughter,” 2009). The threats for many of these cases focus on the victim's actual or alleged behavior that the offender perceived violates his honor. Other open sources for the honor killings just noted a history of domestic problems (“Man Sought in Slaying of 3 Arrested on Bus to Toronto,” 2002), while in other cases, family, friends, and neighbors had witnessed the abuse or had seen injuries from the physical violence (DeJohn, Levin, & Paddock, 2011; Dowdy et al., 2009; Meyer, 2011).

In one domestic violence homicide, a neighbor witnessed prior abuse against the child and police responded the night before the homicide because of a complaint about a loud argument (Reston, 2006). In three of the domestic violence homicides, the victim and offender were involved with the criminal justice system, either with pending cases or the victim had a restraining order (Duncan, 2008; Megino, 2012; Rainwater, 2013). One domestic violence perpetrator had threatened to commit suicide during a prior incident (Duncan, 2008), while another threatened to murder his estranged wife days before the homicide (Aines, 2005).

Only one of the domestic violence homicide offenders claimed to have been abused by his ex-girlfriend whom he later murdered (Rand, 2012). This is similar to the honor killing in which the offender claimed he was an abused spouse prior to beheading his estranged wife (United Press International, 2011). Overall, these findings suggest domestic violence and honor killing offenders included in the current analyses were not engaging in claims of self-defense.

Motivation

Motivations across the homicides can be found in Table 3. The majority of hate homicides, not surprisingly, were motivated by the perpetrator's bias against the victim's race or ethnicity ($n = 11$) and is consistent with prior research on motivation for hate homicides. In eight of these cases, the victims were targeted because of the offender's bias against African Americans. For example, when one offender was asked why he murdered his cellmate, he explicitly stated, “Because he was Black and he raped a White woman” (Yates, 2008). Two hate homicide incidents targeted Latino victims.

Table 3. Motivations Across Honor Killings, Domestic Violence Homicides, and Hate Homicides by Far-Right Extremists.

Honor killings motivations	<i>n</i> = 16
Separation/divorce	6
Actual or perceived Western behavior of the victim	10
Domestic violence homicide motivations	<i>n</i> = 16
Separation/divorce	6
Argument escalated	2
History of abuse	2
Suicide pact	1
Belief offender's son had been molested	1
No information	4
Hate homicide by far-right extremists motivations	<i>n</i> = 16
Victim's race or ethnicity	11
Victim's religion	2
Victim's sexual orientation	2
Bias against homeless individuals	1

During one of these incidents, bystanders heard the three offenders use ethnic slurs. In one case, the offender murdered his girlfriend's (who was also charged with child endangerment) biracial baby and had used racial slurs when referring to the child in the past. In two hate homicides, the offender targeted the victims because of their Jewish religion. Interestingly, in one of these cases, the offender mistakenly thought the victim might be Jewish and killed him because his name sounded Jewish. In another two cases, the victims were targeted because of their sexual orientation. In the remaining case, the offenders committed the offense due to a bias against homeless individuals.

In one hate homicide, one of the two offenders stated he had committed the murder against two homosexual men "because he believed God viewed homosexuality as a mortal sin" (Stanton, 2003). This case begins to show the similarities and differences between hate homicides and honor killings. Although these offenders believed the victim's inherent characteristics violated their belief system, they *did not* make claims about honor or shame. In comparison, each of the honor killing offenders explicitly mentioned the loss of honor or shame brought to their family or themselves because of the victim's actual or perceived misbehaviors. As discussed in Hayes et al.'s (2016) prior work, the primary motivations for honor killings included the process of separation (*n* = 6) or the offender's focus on the victim's westernized behavior that violates the offender's belief system (*n* = 10). In contrast to hate homicides, which focused on the victim's actual or perceived *characteristics* (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion), honor killings revolved around the victim's actual or perceived *behaviors*.

Finally, the most frequent motivation for domestic violence homicides was separation ($n = 6$) followed by the claim that an argument had escalated ($n = 2$). In the other cases, there was a history of child abuse against the victim ($n = 1$), prior domestic violence allegations ($n = 1$), a suicide pact ($n = 1$), or belief the offender's son had been molested ($n = 1$). In the remaining four cases, three of which were murder suicides, information regarding the motivation could not be located.

Perpetrators' Claims of Mental Illness

H4a and H4b were not supported. There were no significant differences in the proportion of offenders who successfully put forth claims of mental illness across the three homicide categories. In total, three of the hate homicide perpetrators either plead guilty but mentally ill ($n = 1$), were deemed incompetent to stand trial ($n = 1$), or were found not guilty by reason of insanity ($n = 1$). Three offenders, not included in the totals, had a history of hospitalization as a juvenile. In addition, four other offenders put forth claims of mental illness that were not supported. One offender, with a history of mental health examinations, attempted to put forth his own independent mental evaluation while another underwent a brain scan.

Only one of the domestic violence offenders attempted to plead he was not guilty by reason of insanity. It should be noted that the outcome of that case could not be found in open sources. Two additional domestic violence offenders made claims of mental illness, arguing the offender had a history of trauma or the offender was ordered to undergo an evaluation. Another perpetrator unsuccessfully appealed to his rough upbringing, whereas another offender claimed he was bipolar. In these latter cases, the claim of mental illness may have been presented as a mitigating factor and was, therefore, not included in totals. Based on the sample of domestic violence homicides included in the current study, none of the offenders' mental illness claims were successful in the criminal justice system.

In comparison, three honor killing perpetrators' mental illness claims were supported in court. Competency hearings were conducted for four of the honor killing offenders, of which only one was found incompetent to stand trial. Another honor killing offender was transferred to a medical unit to undergo treatment after stating he heard voices ("Suspect Reportedly Heard Voices Before Going on Killing Rampage," 2010). Two other offenders of honor killings claimed they were delusional or that they suffered from narcissistic and antisocial personality disorder. Again, these latter two claims may have been raised as potential mitigating factors and were, therefore, not included in totals.

Discussion

Overall, we found many similarities across honor killings, domestic violence homicides, and hate homicides, which is consistent to the propositions proposed by Perry (2001). Surprisingly, only one of the hypotheses was supported. To begin, honor killings may fall under the broader umbrella of domestic violence homicide, as all victims

and offenders of the honor killings were family members (both immediate and extended) or current or former intimate partners. *T* tests confirmed there were not significant differences between these two groups in terms of prior criminal justice involvement related to domestic violence or discussion of prior domestic violence in the open sources. Similarly, we found that separation was the motivating factor for six honor killings and six domestic violence homicides. Research shows the most dangerous time for an abused woman is during the process of separation (Brownridge et al., 2008). Abusers may view separation as a direct challenge to their control, potentially increasing the abuser's controlling or aggressive behaviors (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007).

Although domestic violence is a crime of repeat victimization (Farrell & Buckley, 1999), it is a consistent finding that prior domestic violence is often not mentioned in newspaper articles on domestic violence homicide. Instead, newspapers typically focus on the isolated fatal incident (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Gillespie et al., 2013; Wozniak & McCloskey, 2010). This appears to be the case in the current study, with less than half of the domestic violence homicides (38.89%) mentioning a history of domestic violence in the open sources. Although not statistically significantly different from domestic violence homicides, more than half (57.89%) of the honor killings had a documented history of domestic violence in the open sources and were significantly different from hate homicides in this regard, mirroring Hirschi and Gottfredson's (2001) framework expectations.

Framing the honor killing, which is a domestic violence homicide, as an honor killing may allow the media to focus not only on the victim and offender's cultural and ethnic backgrounds, drawing attention away from the underlying problem of patriarchy (Shier & Shor, 2016), but also on the history of abuse that occurred prior to the incident. Shier and Shor (2016) have suggested that highlighting this boundary between these two homicide types portrays domestic violence as only a problem for some women. Moving to a broader term of femicide would bring attention to the role patriarchy plays in the control of women's personal lives (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003). However, it is important to note that the finding may not have reached statistical significance because of the domestic violence homicides that are reported within the media. These domestic violence homicides may be different from those that are not reported.

We also found more fatalities within the honor killings than domestic violence homicide and hate homicide deaths. It may be that honor killing offenders target individuals close to the victim to make the victim "pay" for dishonoring the family. The offender may believe these individuals also brought shame to the offender and/or the family name by assisting the primary victim. It could also be the case that the primary objective of honor killing offenders and domestic violence homicide offenders differ. Prior research has suggested that the presence of a weapon during nonfatal abusive incidents can escalate the event into a homicide (Saltzman, Mercy, O'Carroll, Rosenberg, & Rhodes, 1992). In comparison, honor killings have an explicit goal of restoring honor (Kulwicki, 2002), which may suggest homicide is the intent of the act. Indeed, more research is needed on unpacking the objectives of honor killing,

domestic violence homicide offenders, and hate homicide offenders and why offenders of honor killings are more likely to target individuals beyond the primary victim.

Hate homicides are motivated by the offender's bias against the victim's actual or perceived *characteristic*. In comparison, honor killings are motivated by the offender's interpretation of the victim's actual or perceived *behavior* that could bring shame to the family. What differentiates these two types of homicide is that for hate homicides, the victim is targeted because of a characteristic that is most often innate. Whereas perpetrators of honor killings perceive their victims as behaving as shameful representatives of the larger family, hate homicide offenders similarly target their victims based on their inherent identities as representatives of a larger community. Due to the interchangeable nature of hate crime victimization, hate homicide perpetrators may select any person on the basis of their actual or perceived identity as a member of a larger community, racial/ethnic or otherwise (McDevitt et al., 2002). Honor killing victims need to satisfy an identity-based criterion and the behavioral component. Honor killing perpetrators kill their victims not only because the victims engaged in a particular behavior but also because he or she is a family member. For example, perpetrators of honor killings are not killing any woman who they perceive violates female chastity norms. Rather, they only murder family members for this behavior. Thus, it is the combination of the behavior and the familial identity that contributes to the honor killing perpetrator's motivation.

Nevertheless, the lack of significant differences between these two groups suggests they may more closely align with Perry's (2001) framework. Within this framework, "notions of difference . . . have been used to justify and construct intersecting hierarchies along lines of sexuality, race, gender, and class" (p. 46). These differences allow powerful groups to maintain dominance. Within hate homicides and honor killings, the less powerful groups include minority groups and women. Although the criterion component may differ for the conceptualization and operationalization of hate homicides and honor killings, both homicides may allow for the punishment of "others" by the offender (Perry, 2001, p. 55). Future research should continue to explore the similarities and differences of these two homicide types.

Based on prior research (Dunbar, 2002; Gruenewald et al., 2013; J. Levin & McDevitt, 2002), it was hypothesized perpetrators of hate homicides committed by the far right would be more likely to have a documented history of mental illness than offenders of honor killings or domestic violence homicides. In total, three of the hate homicide offenders and three honor killing offenders had mental illness claims that were supported in court. In each of these cases, the offender acted on his own. This was an unexpected finding given prior research suggests focusing on the offender's mental illness in domestic violence homicide shifts the blame to the victim (R. Taylor, 2009). Because the concept of honor may differ for offenders of honor killings, offenders may be more likely to justify or neutralize their behavior rather than put forth a claim of mental illness (Doğan, 2014). Prior research (Byers, Crider, & Biggers, 1999; Franklin, 2000) similarly shows how nonextremist hate offenders justify or neutralize their behaviors.

There are limitations that merit discussion. To begin, the estimated sample sizes based on the observed proportions and power based on observed sample sizes can be found in the appendix. Even though it is possible to conduct *t* tests with samples as small as $n = 2$ (De Winter, 2013) and the samples examined in the current analyses are independent of one another, low statistical power may potentially undermine the otherwise valid *t* tests conducted in the current study. Second, intimate partner violence that involves a male victim is less likely to garner media attention (Carlyle, Slater, & Chakroff, 2008), which may bias the domestic violence homicides included in the current analysis. In 2015, only 61% of the almost 16,000 homicides committed in the United States were cleared (Witzig, 2017). It is possible that the media only reports on cases with a known victim, which would affect how the samples were drawn. Future research should compare domestic violence homicides with honor killings reported in official statistics to assess whether these official sources are even capturing honor killings. Third, though we conducted an exhaustive effort to identify all honor killings in the United States, there is a possibility that the media or courts did not identify all honor killings and were, thus, not included in the current study. This possibility similarly exists for the identification of all hate homicides committed by far-right extremists. Finally, the inclusion criteria for the hate homicides and domestic violence homicides were limited to a 1-month time frame to account for external events that may threaten internal validity. Although we also could have controlled for geographical threats to validity, there were often a small number of hate homicides that occurred during the time frame, let alone within the same broad geographical reason. To account for this potential bias and because the ECDB contains the population of both hate homicides and honor killings, random selection was utilized.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings suggest that many honor killings' characteristics may be a variant of domestic homicides. Contrary to expectations, honor killings were more likely to involve multiple victims compared with domestic violence homicides and hate homicides. Honor killings also appear to overlap with hate homicides given the perpetrators' tendency in both cases to act on some larger belief system as well as rely on some identity-based criterion in carrying out their homicides. Although hate homicide perpetrators may solely rely on the victim's inherent identity in carrying out their socio-political objectives, honor killings' perpetrators only punish the honor-violating behaviors of their victims when the victims share a familial identity with the perpetrator. Thus, honor killings are intriguingly a strain of domestic violence homicides that share characteristics with hate homicides.

Appendix

For each of the hypotheses, the estimated sample sizes are calculated based on the observed proportions. In addition, the power is computed based on the observed sample sizes.

Hypothesis 1a: A total sample of 36 offenders with 18 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.18$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 36 offenders, a power of 23.35% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 1b: A total sample of 20 offenders with 10 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.24$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 10 offenders, a power of 43.01% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 2a: A total sample of 224 offenders with 112 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.06$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 224 offenders, a power of 7.80% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 2b: A total sample of 152 offenders with 76 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.08$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 152 offenders, a power of 8.99% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 3a: A total sample of 36 offenders with 18 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.19$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 36 offenders, a power of 20.28% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 3b: A total sample of 10 offenders with five offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.38$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 10 offenders, a power of 74.85% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 4a: A total sample of 414 offenders with 207 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $.04$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 414 offenders, a power of 6.50% lower is obtained.

Hypothesis 4b: A total sample of 414 offenders with 207 offenders per group must be obtained to detect an absolute difference of $-.06$ between the proportions with 20% power using a two-sided 5% level Pearson χ^2 test. With samples smaller than 414 offenders, a power of 11.16% lower is obtained.

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Notes

1. For a more detailed discussion of the data and the coding process, see Freilich et al. (2014).
2. The larger Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) study has relied upon multiple coders. For

- an explanation on how interrater reliability was addressed, please refer to Freilich et al. (2014).
3. The following web engines were searched: (1) LexisNexis, (2) Proquest, (3) Yahoo, (4) Google, (5) Copernic, (6) News Library, (7) Westlaw, (8) Google Scholar (both articles & legal opinions), (9) Amazon, (10) Google U.S. Government, (11) Federation of American Scientists, (12) Google Video, (13) Center for the Study of Intelligence, (14) Surf Wax, (15) Dogpile, (16) Mamma, (17) Librarians' Internet Index, (18) Scirus, (19) All the Web, (20) Google News, (21) Google Blog, (22) Homeland Security Digital Library, (23) Vinelink, (24) The inmate locator, (25) Bureau of Prisons, (26) Individual State Department of Corrections (DOCs), (27) Blackbookonline.info, (28) Quantloos, (29) Anti-Defamation League, (30) Southern Poverty Law Center, and (31) Center on Law and Security.
 4. In a few select cases, we had to expand the scope and search outside the 1-month time span.
 5. In this particular case, the statutory rape conviction was against the offender's girlfriend who became pregnant with his son.

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